



# Maricopa County

## News Release

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### ***Enjoy safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July cookouts*** **Maricopa County Environmental Services Department Promotes Summer Food Safety Tips for your celebrations**

The 4th of July weekend may be ideal for outdoor cooking, but the warm temperatures also provide a breeding ground for bacteria, which can cause foodborne illness—also known as “food poisoning.” That’s why it’s important to take some precautions and practice safe food handling while grilling. The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department is promoting some important tips for safe backyard barbecuing.

“Cases of foodborne illness peak during the warm summer months,” says John Kolman, director with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. “Many people like to include food in their outdoor activities, but may not realize that they need to be extra careful to keep that food safe.”

Follow these suggestions to fight bacteria and reduce the risk of foodborne illness this summer:

- **Clean Hands**- Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food.
- **Marinating**- Marinate raw meat, fish and poultry in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Don’t reuse the marinade from raw meat, fish or poultry unless you boil it.
- **Pre-Heating**- Pre-heat the coals on your grill for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.
- **Temperature Gauge**- Use a meat thermometer to check for safety and doneness.
- **Cooking Thoroughly** – USDA recommends that hamburgers should be cooked to 160°F ground poultry should be cooked to 165°F., and large cuts of beef such as roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145°F.
- **Serving Grilled Food**- Serve hot, grilled foods immediately. When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that previously held raw food.
- **Leftovers**- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in the refrigerator or cooler. A full cooler will stay cold longer than one partially filled, so pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs.

As part of the summer campaign, Maricopa County environmental health specialists will provide tips for keeping food safe throughout the summer.

-More-

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Enjoy safe 4<sup>th</sup> of July cookouts!  
*"Summer Food Safety"*  
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For more information, please refer to the USDA "Kitchen companion, your safe food handbook: at:  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Kitchen\\_Companion.pdf](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf)

You may contact the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department at 602) 506-6616, or  
visit <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/>.